

Testimony of Marcellus Alexander, Executive Vice President of Television, National
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Education Foundation (NABEF)

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Good Morning Chairman Martin, Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, Tate
and McDowell. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today.
My name is Marcellus Alexander. I am Executive Vice President for Television at
the National Association of Broadcasters. I also serve as President of NABEF, an
organization that develops educational programs to help women and people of
color advance in the broadcasting business.

During my time in broadcasting, I have managed and been part- owner of a
successful radio station in Detroit and managed television stations in Baltimore and
Philadelphia. I know first hand the special relationship that exists between a
broadcaster and his or her community.

You have heard from broadcasters around the country that localism is the
heart of everything they do. Well believe it. While detractors may say
broadcasters are not committed to providing localism, the volumes of examples
both in the record and throughout these hearings belie that conclusion. In addition,
such conclusions are inconsistent with one fundamental economic fact:

Broadcasters compete against each other every minute of every day to attract local

viewers to their station. To do that – local, relevant programming is essential.

Without it, viewers simply change the channel and go elsewhere in the market to get it. That is why we have the most vibrant over-the-air broadcasting system in the world.

We are also proud of the record established in this proceeding. Broadcasters in every community, and the local constituents they serve, have appeared in force, to defend their public service record. Governors, Mayors, police chiefs and countless others have stood behind the broadcasters' record of strong service to their communities in cities as large as Chicago and as small as Portland, ME.

But it is broadcasters' commitment to daily local news, local programming and emergency information during times of crisis that sits as the center of their local service. Television stations produce more local news than ever before. In this proceeding, most broadcasters said that, on average, they air 25 to 40 hours of local news each week. That includes multiple blocks of half-hour or hour-long newscasts throughout the day and evening, plus numerous news breaks that appear between regularly scheduled programming, as well as periodic news specials.

You also heard that, beyond local news programming, radio and television stations provide a variety of other locally produced content, including programming on sports, religion, the arts and other community-oriented issues. Indeed, local production of television content is enjoying a "renaissance," with

stations producing, for example, local talent shows, reality programming, home and garden shows, consumer awareness programming, travel shows and community "magazine" shows.

It is also irrefutable that, every day somewhere in the U.S., broadcasters are providing crucial, up to the minute, emergency information to their local communities. Broadcasters have invested millions of dollars in state-of-the art equipment to ensure that their local communities have timely access to critical, life-saving, information.

Broadcaster's unique and important role was never more evident than it was during Katrina and the recent California wildfires. In both of these communities, broadcasters dedicated themselves to getting information to those who needed it most. As their own communities burned, television and radio stations in San Diego and Los Angeles maintained a constant on-air vigilance, alerting citizens with up-to-the-second changes and evacuation orders...in fact, aiding emergency officials with one of the largest evacuations in American history. I would like to show you an example of their commitment. (Roll tape)

But broadcasters are more than conduits for information. They are local citizens as well. As I mentioned earlier, according to our *2006 Broadcast Community Service Report*, broadcasters across the country provide more than \$10 billion worth of community service each year. This is not a contribution that can

be overlooked or swept under the carpet. As we have seen in all of the public hearings thus far, local charities are universal in their praise of broadcasters and the work they do to serve local communities.

Broadcasters carry diverse viewpoints, some conservative some liberal, some young and some old. Broadcasters can also serve as mega-phones for social causes as well. NAB Members, including Radio One, ICBC and Howard University's own WHUR Radio, among many others, rallied support for the Jena 6, helping to change the outcome of that situation. And in Los Angeles and other places, Spanish-language radio stations helped organize rallies to oppose immigration laws, galvanizing the Latino community.

Is our industry perfect? Of course not. Is there room for stations to do more? Absolutely. Will we ever be able to satisfy all our critics? Not a chance. In fact, the record of these hearings show, we've been accused of everything from causing global warming to the mortgage crisis! As Nell Carter used to say in her show of same name "Gimme a break!" We're very proud of our record and will continue to build on it.

But, the truth remains: only competitively viable broadcast stations, sustained by adequate advertising revenues, can serve the public interest effectively and provide the local programming so essential to communities. Competition for advertisers outside the broadcasting arena is increasing by the

month. The capability of local broadcasters to continue operating profitably in financially sustainable ownership structures, must be a central concern of the Commission. As the Commission found nearly 15 years ago, the broadcast "industry's ability to function in the 'public interest, convenience and necessity' is fundamentally premised on its economic viability."

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to join you today. I hope that you have found through this lengthy proceeding, as I have in my 25 years in this business, that when broadcasters say they are committed to localism, they have a record and results to back it up. I believe our record speaks for itself by the millions of Americans who turn, everyday, to their local broadcasters, for the information they need the most and the entertainment they enjoy. Thank you.